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Message Text

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ACTION EUR-12

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 SSO-00 NSCE-00 USIE-00 INRE-00 CIAE-00

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---------- 128086
O R 061112Z SEP 75
FM AMEMBASSY LISBON
TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 4156
INFO AMEMBASSY BONN
AMEMBASSY LONDON
AMEMBASSY MADRID
AMEMBASSY MOSCOW
AMEMBASSY PARIS
AMEMBASSY ROME
AMEMBASSY STOCKHOLM
USMISSION NATO
DIA WASHDC
USCINCEUR VAIHINGEN GER

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 LISBON 5219

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PINT, PO
SUBJECT: RESULTS OF THE RUMP AFM ASSEMBLY

REF: EMBASSY - S/TAP TELCON SEPT. 5

SUMMARY: RUMP AFM ASSEMBLY HELD SEPT. 5 RECEIVED GONCALVES "DECLINE" TO BE ARMED FORCES CHIEF, THREW CRESPO AND THREE LEFTISTS OFF THE REVOLUTIONARY COUNCIL (RC), AND LEFT TO THE RC THE DECISION ON CONTINUED MEMBERSHIP OF ANTUNES, ALVES, AND COSTA MARTINS. OTELO'S REMARK THAT "YOU CAN'T SAY THAT THIS MEETING SOLVED ANYTHING" WAS RIGHT ON THE MARK. PRESIDENT COSTA GOMES HAS AGAIN CREATED AN UNSTABLE POLITICAL EQUILIBRIUM, WHICH GIVES HIM BREATHING SPACE BUT LITTLE ELSE. END SUMMARY.

1. PRESS REPORTS THE RUMP MEETING OF THE ARMED FORCES MOVEMENT ASSEMB
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(AFMA) HELD AT TANCOS ARMY SCHOOL OF ENGINEERING SEPT. 5
WAS ATTENDED BY PRES. COSTA GOMES, PRIME MINISTER GONCALVES,
THE SENIOR CHIEFS, THE MILITARY REGION COMMANDERS, MOST
OF THE NAVY AFMA DELETATES, 47 PRO-GONCALVES ARMY MEMBERS, AND
A FEW PRO-GONCALVES AIR FORCE MEMBERS. ARMY AND AFM MEMBERS
ATTENDED IN "PERSONAL" CAPACITY RATHER THAN AS DELEGATES.

2. THE DECISION OF THE MEETING (REFTELCON) ANNOUNCED THE
EVENING OF SEPT. 5 WAS THAT VASCO GONCALVES HAD "DECLINED" HIS
NOMINATION FOR ARMED FORCES CHIEF OF STAFF AND THE REVOLUTIONARY
COUNCIL WAS RESTRUCTURED AS DESCRIBED BELOW.

E. THE RESTRUCTURED REVOLUTIONARY COUNCIL NOW HAS 21 MEMBERS
INSTEAD OF THE PREVIOUS 29. THE ARMY HAS 8 (NOT INCLUDING
THE PRESIDENT) AND THE NAVY AND AIR FORCE 6 APIECE. THE
MEMBERS ARE:
PRESIDENT COSTA GOMES
--ARMY
ARMY CHIEF GENERAL FABIAO
COPCON HEAD OTELO CARVALHO
GEN. PINTO SOARES (FORMER HEAD OF MILITARY ACADEMY)
CENTRAL REGION HEAD BG CHARAIS
SOUTHERN REGION HEAD BG PEZARAT CORREIA
CPT VASCO LOURENCO
CPT SOUSA E CASTRO
CPT MARQUES JUNIOR
--NAVY
NAVY CHIEF ADM AZEVEDO (PM-DESIGNATE)
ADM ROSA COUTINHO
CPT RAMIRO CORREIA
CPT MARTINS GUERREIRO
CPT CONTREIRAS
LT JUDAS
--AIR FORCE
AF CHIEF MORAIS DA SILVA
GEN PINHO FREIRE
MAJ CANTO E CASTRO
MAJ COSTA NEVES
MAJ PEREIRA PINTO
CPT GRACA E CUNHA
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DROPPED FROM THE RC ARE GEN VASCO GONCALVES, CDR CRESPO,
CPT FERREIRA DE SOUSA, CPT MACEDO AND NORTHERN REGION
COMMANDER BG CORVACHO. THE CASES OF MAJ ALVES, MAJ ANTUNES,
AND MAJ COSTA MARTINS ARE TO BE CONSIDERED BY THE RC.

4. RESTRUCTURED RC NOW HAS IN THE PRO-ANTUNES ANTI-
COMMUNIST CAMP 6 MEMBERS OF THE ANTUNES NINE, MORAIS DA SILVA, AND
PINHO FREIRE FOR A TOTAL OF 8. ANTI-COMMUNIST BUT MORE

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AMBIGUOUS IN THEIR ACTIONS ARE FABIAO, OTELO, PINTO SOARES,
AND MARQUES JUNIOR FOR A TOTAL OF 4. LEFT BUT NOT NECESSARILY
WITH THE PCP ARE AZEVEDO, ROSA COUTINHO, PEREIRA PINTO, AND
GRACA E CUNHA FOR A TOTAL OF 4. FOLLOWERS OF THE PCP LINE
ARE RAMIRO CORREIA, MARTINS GUERREIRO, CONTREIRAS, AND JUDAS
FOR A TOTAL OF 4.

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5. COMMENT: OTELO'S COMMENT THAT "YOU CAN'T SAY THAT THIS MEETING
SOLVED ANYTHING" WAS RIGHT ON THE MARK. THE LEGITIMACY OF
MEETING ITSELF, WITHOUT THE PRESENCE OF MOST OF THE ARMY AND
AIR FORCE DELEGATES, IS CERTAINLY OPEN TO QUESTION. DROPPING
CRESPO AND PUTTING IN DOUBT ANTUNES, ALVES, AND COSTA
MARTINS, KEY PARTICIPANTS IN APRIL 74 COUP, AND KEEPING
NON-PARTICIPANTS RAMIRO CORREIA, MARTINS GUERREIRO, AND JUDAS
IS NOT GOING TO GO DOWN WELL WITH LARGE PARTS OF THE ARMED
FORCES.

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6. GIVEN THE NARROW POLITICAL BALANCE DESCRIBED ABOVE, IT IS HARD TO FORECAST HOW THE RC WILL VOTE ON THE QUESTION OF THE THREE MEMBERS WHOSE CASES MUST BE DECIDED. IT IS DIFFICULT TO SEE HOW THE ANTUNES GROUP SUPPORTERS CAN ACCEPT THE PURGE OF THEIR LEADERSHIP. YET IF THEY GO BACK ON THE COUNCIL IT WOULD PUSH POLITICAL BALANCE IN FAVOR OF THE ANTUNES GROUP--A DECISION
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THE PRESIDENT MAY HOPE TO AVOID. MOREOVER, IT WILL BE MORE DIFFICULT FOR THE NINE TO TAKE A HARD LINE, WITH THE SYMBOLISM OF GONCALVES REMOVED AND COSTA GOMES PRESSING FOR "RECONCILIATION."

7. AL LONG AS AZEVEDO FAILS TO FORM A GOVERNMENT GONCALVES IS STILL PRIME MINISTER, AN INCENTIVE FOR THE PS AND PPD TO REACH AGREEMENT WITH AZEVEDO. THEY TOO WILL BE UNDER PRESSURE TO KISS AND MAKE UP. BOTH HAD PUT AS CONDITIONS FOR THEIR PARTICIPATION:
NO MEETING OF THE AMFA BEFORE IT WAS RESTRUCTURED AND THE PARTICIPATION
OF THE ANTUNES NINE IN THE GOVERNMENT. PS AND PPD HAVE BEEN TAKING VERY TOUGH LINE WITH PRESIDENT IN THEIR CONDITIONS FOR JOINING THE AZEVEDO GOVERNMENT. THEY HAVE NOT REACTED YET, BUT OUR GUESS IS THAT THEY ARE GOING TO HOLD OUT FOR MORE CONCESSIONS, ALTHOUGH THEY OBVIOUSLY WILL NOT INSIST THAT EVERY ONE OF THEIR CONDITIONS BE MET. SOME OF THE KEY ONES ARE NOT CONDITIONS THAT THE PRESIDENT CAN ACCEPT AND MAINTAIN HIS BALANCING ACT BETWEEN THE PRO- AND ANTI-COMMUNIST FORCES.

8. IN SUM, THIS AFFAIR HAS ALL THE EARMARKS OF THE PRESIDENT'S POLITICAL HANDWORK: AMBIGUITY, LACK OF LEADERSHIP, BALANCING BETWEEN FORCES, ILLEGITIMACY, AND EXCESSIVE CONCERN FOR THE UNREPRESENTATIVE PRO-COMMUNIST GROUP.

9. THE PRESIDENT'S SOLUTION AGAIN IGNORES THE FUNDAMENTAL POLITICAL DYNAMIC OF THIS COUNTRY, WHICH IS THAT THE 80 PERCENT OF THE PEOPLE ARE ANTI-COMMUNIST. THUS THE PRESIDENT HAS AGAIN CREATED AN UNSTABLE POLITICAL EQUILIBRIUM WHICH GIVES HIM BREATHING SPACE, BUT LITTLE ELSE. HE IS OBVIOUSLY BANKING ON TRADITIONAL PORTUGUESE PROPENSITY TO COMPROMISE AS A MEANS OF "PRESSURING THE NINE AND THE DEMOCRATIC PARTIES INTO SOLUTIONS WHICH WILL ENABLE HIM TO STAY IN POWER BY PLAYING OFF ONE FACTION AGAINST ANOTHER, BUT WHICH WILL FALL FAR SHORT OF RESOLVING THE COUNTRY'S POLITICAL PROBLEMS ALONG THE LINES OF THE POPULAR WILL. HOPEFULLY, THE ANTI-COMMUNIST FORCES ARE BECOMING ALERT TO HIS GAME AND WILL STAND FIRM. IF THEY DON'T, THE FAR RIGHT MAY MOVE, WITH ALL THE DISRUPTION AND COUNTER REACTION THAT WOULD PRODUCE.
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